



VILLAGE OF WINNEBAGO

MEMORANDUM

Prepared By: Joseph Dienberg, Village Administrator
To: Committee of the Whole
Date: August 19, 2026
Subject: Long-Term Village Facilities Direction

Background: For many years, the Village has discussed the need to take a comprehensive look at its facilities and determine how they can best support current operations and the community's long-term needs. The Village's current Strategic Plan identifies the following short-term complex goal: *"Investigate locations and costs for a new Village Hall/Police Department/Community Center building and a Public Works wash bay."*

Throughout the spring and summer of this year, the Executive Team—consisting of the Director of Public Works, Chief of Police, and Village Administrator—has met to evaluate the facility needs of each department. As part of this process, the team also completed a SWOT analysis of existing Village properties and other potential facility locations. The purpose of this review was to identify the most appropriate long-term use of each property and develop a cohesive direction for Village facilities. Based on that work, staff recommends the following approach.

Public Works: The Village's most immediate and critical facility need is an adequate Public Works wash bay. Public Works staff has preliminarily evaluated both constructing a new wash bay and improving an existing Village-owned building. One potential option is the former sludge-drying building that was apart of the former wastewater treatment plant, which is currently used for cold storage. Repurposing or replacing this building could address the condition and safety concerns associated with the existing Public Works facilities. However, this would not resolve the broader concerns associated with the aging Public Works facility. The primary building would remain in service and would require further evaluation and, ultimately, a comprehensive renovation or replacement. This approach would address the most urgent need while providing additional time to plan and fund a long-term solution for the overall Public Works complex.

An additional consideration is the Village's existing intergovernmental agreement with Winnebago Township. The current agreement does not adequately define the parties' long-term responsibilities or provide a strong foundation for a major joint facility investment. It would need to be revisited as part of this process.

Additional Township participation could make a joint facility more financially feasible for both entities. However, it may also present challenges regarding funding, ownership, operations, maintenance, and long-term control. These matters should be discussed and addressed through a comprehensive intergovernmental agreement before the Village proceeds with a shared facility.

Police Department: The Police Department has indicated that its current administrative offices in Village Hall and its separate police garage are adequate for present operations. The department has identified several desired improvements, including a dedicated meeting and training space and improved employee facilities. However, these are currently operational preferences rather than immediate facility needs.

The Village has also begun preliminary conversations with the Win-Bur-Sew Fire Protection District regarding the potential for shared public-safety space. Both organizations recognize that space may be available and that sharing facilities could create efficiencies for taxpayers while improving coordination between public-safety agencies.

Any shared-space arrangement would require a strong and detailed intergovernmental agreement addressing each organization's responsibilities, costs, access, operations, and long-term use of the property. Relocating some Police Department functions could also free space within Village Hall to address existing facility limitations, including the lack of a dedicated meeting room and employee lunch or break space. Creating these areas would improve the building's functionality and help extend its useful life.

This concept remains in its infancy, and there is no immediate urgency to act. Staff recommends continuing these conversations and evaluating the concept as a potential intermediate or long-term opportunity.

Administration: Village Hall remains adequate for the Administration Department's current operations. The current building does not meet current ADA standards, including the entryways, restrooms, and foyer. The building lacks certain desirable features, including a dedicated meeting room, employee break or lunch space, and significant room for additional staff. While these limitations should be considered in future planning, there is no immediate need for substantial administrative staffing growth or a new Village Hall. With appropriate repairs, maintenance, and potential remodeling, the current building can continue serving the Village for the foreseeable future.

Long-Term Municipal Facility: Staff believes that, even with continued maintenance and improvements to existing facilities, the Village should plan for a consolidated municipal facility/community center within the next 20 to 30 years.

Based on the properties evaluated, staff believes the current police garage property is the most appropriate long-term location. It provides the Village's largest suitable footprint in the downtown area and would allow the municipal center to remain connected to the historic and commercial core of the community.

Maintaining Village Hall downtown supports nearby businesses and ensures that municipal operations continue bringing employees, residents, and visitors into the downtown area. Moving Village Hall north toward the Route 20 commercial area would reduce this activity, while locating it on the Village's approximately five-acre Public Works property would introduce additional traffic into a primarily residential area.

When a new facility is eventually constructed, the existing Village Hall could potentially be sold for private redevelopment, returning the property to the tax rolls and creating an additional opportunity for downtown investment. This recommendation establishes a long-term direction rather than an immediate construction proposal. Identifying the preferred site now will allow the Village to protect the property, avoid investments that conflict with its future use, and make incremental facility decisions that support the eventual goal.

Recommended Direction: Staff recommends that the Village proceed with the following priorities:

1. Begin evaluating Public Works wash bay options as early as the current budget process, including preliminary cost estimates for new construction and the potential improvement or replacement of the former sludge-drying building, and revisit the intergovernmental agreement with Winnebago Township before committing to any joint Public Works facility or major shared investment.
2. Continue preliminary discussions with the Win-Bur-Sew Fire Protection District regarding opportunities for shared public-safety space, without establishing an immediate timeline or commitment.
3. Continue maintaining and, where practical, improving the existing Village Hall and Police Department facilities to extend their useful lives.
4. Recognize the current police garage property as the preferred long-term location for a future municipal facility while continuing to evaluate needs, costs, and funding opportunities.

This direction allows the Village to address its most immediate facility need, the Public Works wash bay, while establishing a thoughtful and cohesive framework for future Police, Administration, and municipal facility decisions.